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BY THE SENATE,

JANUARY 22d, 1867.

Read and referred to the Committee on Finance.

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

M A N A G E R S

OF THE

H O U S E O F R E F U G E.

JANUARY SESSION, 1867.

ANNAPOLIS:
HENRY A. LUCAS, PRINTER.

1867.

REPORT.

*To the Honorable,
the General Assembly of Maryland:*

GENTLEMEN:—By their Act of incorporation the Board of Managers of the House of Refuge are required to report annually to your Honorable Body the condition of the Institution. In presenting this, their sixteenth report, they have reason to congratulate themselves on the increased evidences of the wisdom of their organization and the usefulness of their labors, and at the same time they embrace the opportunity of renewing the assurance of their earnest endeavors to secure the continued confidence of the community by a careful performance of the responsible duties they have assumed.

Since the opening of the Refuge, in 1855, sixteen hundred and thirty-eight children have been under its discipline, of whom thirteen hundred and ninety-four were boys, and two hundred and forty-four were girls. At the close of the past year there were three hundred and eighty inmates in the House, which has been about the general daily average. The appended report of the Superintendent will supply all other necessary statistical details, which are not without their special interest, and to which attention is respectfully requested.

By the annexed statement of the Treasurer it will be seen that the total of expenditures on general account during the last fiscal year was \$51,149.00. From this sum deduct a payment of \$4,116.26, on account of 1865, and we have \$47,032.74 as the actual cost of the care-keeping of the inmates, which, the average number being as already stated, is at the rate of 34 1-100 cents daily per capita. This a large advance on the cost before the late war; in 1859 it was as low as a small fraction over 22 cents. The contrast will show how heavily the prices of mere common supplies have increased; and how stringent an economy must be practiced to sustain so large a household, even with the somewhat increased means so necessarily bestowed during the last three

or four years by the State and city ; and it becomes, too, the strongest argument for a continuance, at least, if not an increase, of that legislative and municipal liberality which has hitherto been extended to this Institution. Notwithstanding this exorbitant advance of prices, by careful management we have been able to close the year without a suspended debt, and with a balance on hand carry on the operations of the House until new supplies shall be appropriated, which are generally made available about the first of March.

In making an approximate estimate of the wants of the Board for the support of the Institution, we can only go back to the actual expenditures on general account of last year as a basis of calculation. This, as before said, was in round numbers, \$47,000. To meet this sum we have only an available balance of \$9,127.85, which, taken from the first amount, will leave a deficit of about \$38,000. It is only proper to say, however, that in the statement there appears an item of income which it might seem only right to bring into the account.

This the proceeds from the labor of boys board of inmates, &c., amounting to \$9,184.76 ; of this, \$7,332.93 is charged to labor, and \$1,599.24 to board. But this labor is under contract, and may or may not be made available for the current year, owing to the unsettled condition of the business and finances of the country. Under the circumstances, it can only be looked upon as a contingent receipt, and as such cannot be safely relied on as a certain resource of support.

With no present prospect then, of a favorable change in prices, and with the certainty that the number of inmates will not be less, the Board are under the necessity of seeking from the State and city, appropriations equal at least to the deficit above estimated.

The Board had hoped to have been able to report the commencement at least of the erection of the new wing so much required, and in former communications referred to ; but exercising proper caution and having before them rough details of the cost of the building, it was considered to be the most prudent course to defer the work until there shall seem to be some prospect of a decrease in the price of materials and labor. They do not feel authorized to enter into any engagements for so large an expenditure as will be required ; and under existing uncertainties as to obtaining means, they prefer to exercise a patient waiting until things shall settle down to a more reasonable standard. In thus depriving themselves of a most earnest desire, they have not been negligent, both in adding to their future building resources, and of profitably investing the funds already in hand. Thus, they have now available \$20,454.09, towards the cost of the erec-

tion, which under present disadvantages, cannot be estimated to cost less than \$50,000.

When in their judgment the proper time arrives, the work will be commenced and pressed on to early completion.

In regard to the sanitary condition of the house, we have many reasons for gratulation. Among so many children, with physical antecedents predisposing to disease, it is a matter for thankfulness that for a greater portion of the year the infirmary has been unoccupied, and scarce a serious case of sickness has demanded prolonged attention. At the early appearance of cholera in the country, a committee was organized who had charge of the sanitary condition of the house. The physician in his report says, "that the precautions taken have had much to do in preventing cholera and typhus, which have been so prevalent in other institutions." Not a death from any cause has occurred since 1864.

In the moral instructions of the inmates, our chief reliance is the means of the Sabbath services in the chapel, and the Sabbath schools. For these we have been indebted, as usual, to the voluntary aid of ministers of different denominations and to a corps of teachers from the city. It is a pleasure at every renewal of our Annual Reports, specially to acknowledge our indebtedness to these good friends. Without their valuable and self-sacrificing services, we should be deprived of the most essential means in aid of our work.

We have reason to know that their efforts for good have not been all in vain, nor their words cast as worthless motes upon the wind. Instructive readings are also given to the children on the Sabbath by their teachers, in which they exhibit much interest.

In this connection we may mention that within the past year, we were the recipients of a most generous and thoughtful gift of nearly 2,000 volumes, with well finished book-cases to contain them from the Mechanical Fire Company, one of the oldest and most respected of the associations of our city. The collection embraces many valuable books, and as the taste for reading may exhibit itself, will afford to the inmates a rich source of entertainment and instruction.

The day schools are seven in number—six for boys and one for girls, under the charge of three female and four male teachers. Of course, there is a great diversity of capacity, and a greater of acquisition among the children. There is one notable fact deserving remark, that among the oldest and most criminal, there is found not only a greater ignorance, but also a greater indisposition or incapability to learn. In connection with this is another fact. In our examinations, it is found that truancy has been the very common vice among the older and the younger delinquents. The steps in the advance to juvenile criminality are only natural sequences.

At the base we are almost sure to find bad home government, then parental neglect, next truancy from school, then vagrancy from home, and in the end, actual crime. The indications for the best means of reclamation seem to be plain. Among these, after religious instruction, we would place the thorough discipline of the schools, enforced by persistent system, kindness, decision, and when necessary uncompromising vigor.

Here the healthful restraint, the mental labor, the awakened emulation, the progressive acquisition, will be found to be the most desirable means in curing the mind perverted and diseased from mere animal indulgence or criminal propensities, and thus perfecting the work of a reformatory institution. In all this, regular and useful bodily labor is by no means to be overlook, by it is only to be enforced as an auxiliary to the work of the school, and as a curative of previous idle habits, to which, with very rare exceptions, all have been addicted. If a sound mind be desired, we must have a sound body, and this can be best produced by proper physical employments. But if this special object be ignored, and pecuniary gain be made the chief end of labor, then that which ought to be merely subsidiary, is made paramount, and the whole scheme of moral reform is thus most unwisely subverted.

The cultivation of a taste for music, vocal and instrumental, and the regular professional instruction in the science, still holds a place in our scheme of education as an element in juvenile reform.

The Sabbath services too are heightened by the educated singing of the inmates, and it must be a gratification to their instructress in this department, to receive the repeated thanks of those who have left our care, for the knowledge imparted to them by her teaching. One lad gratefully says,—“often when at my daily employment, come to my mind those beautiful hymns which were taught me by Mrs. L.” and this, doubtlessly is the experience of many others. It has been well said that “a hymn may find him whom a sermon flies,” and who can tell how many have carried away with them a devotional thought, or a convictive admonition, or a word of truth, thus happily taught, that will come unbidden in the hour of temptation, or of awakened conscience, and be to them as a word seasonably spoken, and have its enduring and soul-saving effect.

Instrumental and choral music continue to be taught by Prof. Deems. Many of his pupils who have gone from us, are heard from as holding reputable positions in Church Choirs, as well as in brass bands in different towns in the States.

One of the military bands in the city is largely composed of former inmates, and it is gratifying to know that, profiting by the experiment commenced and successfully prosecuted in the Refuge, other Institutions and large Schools have followed the example with as complete satisfaction.

The Superintendence of the Refuge still continues under the charge of Mr. William R. Lincoln, who with his corps of assistants, have used their best endeavors to perform their difficult duties aright, and to earn the respect and thanks of the Board by their faithfulness and labors.

In casting over the history of the Refuge for the past year, the Board sensibly feel their indebtedness to a merciful Providence for the many benefits bestowed upon the Institution. For this they would desire to express their sincere thankfulness, and while they would thus gratefully acknowledge the blessings of the past, they would also earnestly look forward in reverent trust for the future. The children have singularly enjoyed good health, the appliances for their moral and mental instruction have been well supplied, and all their necessary wants abundantly provided for.

From those who have gone to homes provided for them, we have generally good reports, as may be learned from the letters in the appendix. That here and there an exception may be found, cannot be denied, but when we recur to the antecedents of these, and remember the advanced age at which they were committed to the House, the only wonder is, that there are not found more who defiantly spurn all human instruction and restraints, and wilfully pursue a course that can only end in shame. An Almighty hand can alone control them. Notwithstanding such failures, however, so much is found to cheer us on in our labors, that we gladly accept the responsibilities imposed upon us. Seeking no other reward than the grateful consciousness, that we have been able to do some little good in our day, in the special sphere allotted to us.

Respectfully submitted,

CHARLES M. KEYSER,
President.

JOHN J. GRAVES,
Secretary.

Baltimore, January 1st, 1867.

